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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/828,277	04/21/2004	Akihiro Ohno	252094US2	5431
22850	7590	03/27/2006	EXAMINER	
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			BOEHLER, ANNE MARIE M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3611	

DATE MAILED: 03/27/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/828,277	OHNO ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Anne Marie M. Boehler	3611

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claim 4 objected to because of the following informalities: in the last line of claim 4, "valve" should be –value-. Appropriate correction is required.
2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Takasaki (USPN 5,813,490).

Takahashi teaches a four wheel drive system with a mode switching control 21 means and a switching inhibiting means that prevents a mode change from occurring based on front to rear wheel speed difference and vehicle speed.

4. Claims 2 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Glab (USPN 6,450,921).

Glab teaches a four wheel drive vehicle with a switch control means 40 and a gradual switching control means for gradually decreasing the torque the transmission is transmitting before switching mode.

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takasaki.

Takasaki teaches providing lamps in the driver compartment of the vehicle to indicate various conditions. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to similarly signal to the driver the four wheel drive mode state, in order to inform the driver of the current drive mode.

7. Claims 4, 5, 7, and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takasaki in view of Glab.

Takahashi lacks a means for gradually decreasing the torque the transmission is transmitting before switching mode. Takasaki teaches providing blinking lamps to indicate various conditions.

Glab teaches a four wheel drive vehicle with a switch control means 40 and a gradual switching control means for gradually decreasing the torque the transmission is transmitting before switching mode.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide the Takahashi system with a means for gradually decreasing torque before switching mode, as taught by Glab, in order to effect smooth transition between modes. Regarding claims 7 and 8, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide a blinking light to indicate to the driver when mode selection is being inhibited or the gradual control operation is active, in order to notify the driver of the present driving condition.

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Deike teaches a device that prevents the activation of a four wheel drive actuator when a wheel slip is detected (col. 1 lines 58-62).

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Anne Marie M. Boehler whose telephone number is 571-272-6641. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30-5:00, Monday-Thursday, and alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lesley Morris can be reached on 571-272-6612. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

AmB 3/20/08
Anne Marie M. Boehler
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3611

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